NUMB. V.

The LOVER.

By MARMADUKE MYRTLE, *Gent.*

——My Soul's far better Part,
Ceaſe weeping, nor afflict thy tender Heart.
For what thy Father to thy Mother was,
That Faith to thee, that Solemn Vow I paſs!

Art of Love, Congreve.

Saturday, March 6. 1714.

AS I have fixed my Stand in the very Center of *Covent-Garden*, a Place for this laſt Century particularly famed for Wit and Love, and am near the Play-houſe, where one is repreſented every Night by the other, I think I ought to be particularly careful of what paſſes in my Neighbourhood; and as I am a profeſs'd Knight-Errant, do all that lies in my Power to make the Charming Endowment of Wit, and the prevailing Paſſion of Love, ſubſervient to the Intereſts of Honour and Virtue. You are to underſtand, that having yeſterday made an Excurſion from my Lodge, there paſſed by me near St. *James*'s the Charmer of my Heart. I have, ever ſince her Parents firſt beſtowed her, avoided all places by her frequented; but Accident once or twice in a Year brings the bright Phantom into my ſight, upon which there is a flutter in my Boſom for many Days following; when I conſider that during this Emotion I am highly exalted in my Being, and my every Sentiment improved by the effects of that Paſſion; when I reflect that all the Objects which preſent themſelves to me, now are viewed in a different light from that in which they had appeared, had I not lately been exhilerated by her Preſence; in fine, when I find in my ſelf ſo ſtrong an Inclination to oblige and entertain all whom I meet with, accompanied with ſuch a readineſs to receive kind Impreſſions of thoſe I converſe with, I am more and more convinced, that this Paſſion is in honeſt Minds the ſtrongeſt Incentive that can move the Soul of Man to laudable Accompliſhments. Is a Man Juſt? let him fall in Love and grow Generous; is a Man Good-natured? let him Love and grow Publick-Spirited. It immediately makes the Good which is in him ſhine forth in new Excellencies, and the Ill vaniſh away without the Pain of Contrition, but with a ſudden Amendment of Heart. This ſort of Paſſion, to produce ſuch Effects, muſt neceſſarily be conceived towards a modeſt and virtuous Woman, for the Arts to obtain her muſt be ſuch as are agreeable to her, and the Lover becomes immediately poſſeſſed with ſuch Perfections or Vices, as make way to the Object of his Deſires. I have plenty of Examples to enforce theſe Truths, every Night that a Play is acted in my Neighbourhood; the noble Reſolutions which Heroes in Tragedy take, in order to recommend themſelves to their Miſtreſſes, are no way below the Conſideration of the wiſeſt Men, yet, at the ſame time, Inſtructions the moſt probable to take Place in the Minds of the Young and Inconſiderate: But in our degenerate Age the Poet muſt have more than ordinary Skill to raiſe the Admiration of the Audience ſo high, in the more great and publick Parts of his Drama, to make a looſe People attend to a Paſſion which they never, or that very faintly, felt in their own Boſoms. That perfect Piece, which has done ſo great Honour to our Nation and Language, called *Cato*, excells as much in the Paſſion of its Lovers, as in the ſublime Sentiments of its Hero; their generous Love, which is more Heroick than any concern in the Chief Characters of moſt Dramas, make but ſubordinate Characters in this.

When *Marcia* reproves *Juba* for entertaining her with Love in ſuch a Conjuncture of Affairs, wherein the Common Cauſe ſhould take Place of all other Thoughts, the Prince anſwers in this noble Manner:

——Thy Reproofs are juſt,
Thou Virtuous Maid; I'll haſten to my Troops,
And fire their languid Souls with Cato's *Virtue.*
If e'er I lead them to the Field, when all
The War ſhall ſtand ranged in its juſt Array,
And dreadful Pomp: Then will I think on Thee!
O lovely Maid, then will I think on Thee!
And in the ſhock of charging Hoſts, remember
What glorious Deeds ſhou'd grace the Man, who hopes
For Marcia's *Love.*

It has been obſervable, that the Stage in all times has had the utmoſt Influence on the Manners and Affections of Mankind, and as thoſe Repreſentati-

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ons of Human Life have tended to promote Virtue or Vice, ſo has the Age been improved or debauched. I doubt not but the frequent Reflections upon Marriage and Innocent Love, with which our Theatre has long abounded, have been the great cauſe of our Corrupt Sentiments in this reſpect. It is not every Youth that can behold the fine Gentleman of the Comedy repreſented with a good Grace, leading a looſe and profligate Life, and condemning Virtuous Affection as inſipid, and not be ſecretly Emulous of what appears ſo amiable to a whole Audience. Theſe gay Pictures ſtrike ſtrong and laſting Impreſſions on the Fancy and Imagination of Youth, and are hardly to be eraſed in riper Years, unleſs a Commerce between Virtuous and Innocent Lovers be painted with the ſame Advantage, and with as lovely Colours by the moſt Maſterly Hands on the Theatre. I have ſaid Maſterly Hands, becauſe they muſt be ſuch who can run counter to our natural Propenſity to inordinate Pleaſure; little Authors are very glad of Applauſe purchaſed any way; looſe Appetites and Deſires are eaſily raiſed, but there is a wide Difference between that Reputation and Applauſe which is obtained from our Wantonneſs, and that which flows from a Capacity of ſtirring ſuch Affections which, upon cool Thoughts, contribute to our Happineſs.

But I was going to give an Account of the Exultation which I am in, upon an accidental View of the Woman whom I had long loved, with a moſt pure, tho' ardent Paſſion; but as this is, according to my former Repreſentations of the Matter, no way expedient for her to indulge me in, I muſt break the Force of it by leading a Life ſuitable and analogous to it, and making all the Town ſenſible, how much they owe to her bright Eyes which inſpire me in the Performance of my preſent Office, in which I ſhall particularly take all the Youth of both Sexes under my Care.

The two Theatres, and all the Polite Coffee-houſes, I ſhall conſtantly frequent, but principally the Coffee-houſe under my Lodge, *Button*'s, and the Play-houſe in *Covent-Garden*: But as I ſet up for the Judge of Pleaſures, I think it neceſſary to aſſign particular Places of Reſort to my young Gentlemen as they come to Town, who cannot expect to pop in at Mr. *Button*'s, on the firſt Day of their Arrival in Town. I recommend it, therefore, to young Men to frequent *Shanley*'s ſome Days before they take upon them to appear at *Button*'s; I have ordered, that no one look in the Face of any New-Commer, and taken effectual Methods that he may poſſeſs himſelf of any empty Chair in the Houſe without being ſtared at; but foraſmuch as ſome who may have been in Town for ſome Months together heretofore, and by long Abſence have relapſed from the Audacity they had arrived at, into their firſt Baſhfulneſs and Ruſticity, I have given them the ſame Privilege of Obſcure Entry for ten Days. I have directed alſo, that Books be kept of all that paſſes in Town in all the eminent Coffee-houſes, that any Gentleman, tho' juſt arrived out of Exile from the moſt diſtant Counties in *Great Britain*, may as familiarly enter into the Town-Talk, as if he had lodged all that time in *Covent-Garden*; but above all things I have provided, that proper Houſes for Bathing and Cupping may be ready for thoſe Country Gentlemen, whoſe too healthy Viſages give them an Air too Robuſt and importunate for this Polite Region of Lovers, who have ſo long avoided Wind and Weather, and have every Day been out-ſtripp'd by them in the Ground they have paſſed over by ſeveral Miles. As to the Orders under which I have put my Female Youth at Aſſemblies, Opera's and Plays, I ſhall declare them in a particular Chapter under the Title of *The Government of the Eye in Publick Places.*

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